

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 01245 021829Z

72

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 /049 W

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O 021745Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9619

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1245

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MORG, HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAN MILITARY

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 1203, (B) TEGUCIGALPA 1222

1. EMBASSY JUDGEMENT PARA 3 REF B THAT BPOWER BEHIND CURRENT CHANGES IS SAME GROUP OF REFORMIST LIEUTENANT COLONELS IDENTIFIED IN NOVEMBER HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY SEVERAL SOURCES. THE OFFICERS ARE CURRENTLY BATTALION COMMANDERS, SCHOOL COMMANDANTS AND/OR HOLD OTHER KEY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS.

2. EMBASSY SOURCES INDICATE THAT PLANS FOR CHANGES WERE VERY CLOSELY HELD BECAUSE OF EXPERIENCE OF LAST NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER IN WHICH PLANS BECAME MORE OR LESS OPEN KNOWLEDGE. DUE TO THIS ADVANCE WARNING, LOPEZ WAS ABLE AT THAT TIME TO PREPARE COUNTER MOVE. THIS TIME HE APPARENTLY WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE.

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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 01245 021829Z

3. INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE INDICATES THAT REFORMIST LIEUTENANT COLONELS HAD THREE SUITABLE CANDIDATES FOR

COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES: MELGAR, COL.  
POLICARPO PAZ GARCIA (COMMANDER OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES)  
AND COL. ENRIQUE SOTO CANO ( COMMANDER OF AIR FORCES).  
EMBASSY REGARDS IT LIKELY THAT LOPEZ WAS PRESENTED WITH  
THESE ALTERNATIVES AND THAT HE SELECTED MELGAR AS BEING MOST  
LOYAL AND LEAST COMPETITIVE.

4. SOURCES HAVE INFORMED MILGP OFFICERS THAT THERE EXIST  
TWO LISTS CONCERNING SENIOR COLONELS; ONE LIST OF NAMES  
INCLUDES SENIOR COLONELS FOR EARLY RETIREMENT AND THE OTHER  
CONTAINS NAMES OF COLONELS TO BE POSTED OUTSIDE HONDURAS.

5. LT. COLONEL CESAR ELVIR SIERRA, WHO SIGNED SUPERIOR  
DEFENSE COUNCIL BULLETIN OF MARCH 31 (REF A) AS SECRETARY,  
HAS BEEN REPORTED TO BE THE DESIGNEE FOR CHIEF OF STAFF  
OF ARMY. IF CORRECT, EMBASSY REGARDS THIS AS  
PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT. THIS WOULD  
INDICATE THAT AN ENTIRELY NEW STAFF WILL BE NAMED AND  
CURRENT INCUMBENTS OCCUPYING SENIOR COLONEL POSITIONS  
MAY BE INCLUDED IN LISTS DESCRIBED PARA 4.

6 ALTHOUGH LEADERSHIP OF LIEUTENANT COLONELS' GROUP  
HAS NOT BEEN POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED THE NAME MOST OFTEN  
MENTIONED IS LT. COLONEL MARIO FONSECA LOPEZ,  
COMMANDER OF THE MILITARY SCHOOL (ESCUELA MILITAR  
FRANCISCO MORAZAN).

7. APPARENTLY AIR FORCE OFFICERS ARE NOT DIRECTLY  
INVOLVED IN CURRENT MANUEVERING.

8. AS REPORTED FREF B, THE CITY CONTINUES QUIET  
AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF UNUSUAL TENSION OR  
MILITARY MOVEMENT.  
SANCHEZ

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## Message Attributes

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